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ANALYSIS

Edited by Bernard Mayo, with the advice
of A. J. Ayer, R. B. Braithwaite, Herbert
Dingle, A. E. Duncan-Jones, P. T. Geach,
C. A. Mace, A. M. MacIver, and H. H. Price

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BASIL BLACKWELL · BROAD STREET · OXFORD

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WHAT IS IT TO ACT UPON A PROPOSITION?

By RODERICK CHISHOLM

1. VENN said that to act upon a proposition is to 'translate' belief into action.¹ Others have said that to believe a proposition is to be prepared to act upon it. Yet a rational man may act upon propositions which he does not believe, just as he may believe propositions upon which he does not act. Indeed such a man may act upon a proposition while he is also acting upon its contradictory; in setting out to walk he acts upon the proposition that it will not rain, and in carrying his umbrella he acts upon the proposition that it will rain. But Venn is right, I think, in suggesting that the concept of *acting upon*—a concept to which many philosophers appeal—is one of the points at which we find the link between thought and action.

We speak, not only of 'acting upon the proposition that . . .', but also of 'acting on the information that', 'on the belief that', 'on the chance that', and 'on the possibility that'. Our choice of these formulations may depend upon our own attitude toward what the that-clause expresses, or if we are speaking of another person, it may depend upon what we believe to be his attitude toward what the that-clause expresses. If we say 'He acted on the information that it was going to rain', then we suggest that he knew it was going to rain; if we say 'He acted on the possibility that it was going to rain', then we suggest, not only that he did not know that it would rain, but also that he may not even have believed that it would rain. But so far as the act itself is concerned, acting on the possibility that it will rain may not differ at all from acting on the information that it will rain; in both cases we may speak of acting upon the proposition that it will rain.

The concept of acting upon a proposition is not that of acting upon someone's advice, or that of acting upon someone's suggestion, recommendation, command, order, or request. If I act on your advice, then I set out to do what you advise me to do—and I set out to do it *because* you advise me to do it. If I am acting *on* your advice—as distinguished from doing what, as it happens, you advise me to do—then I am acting upon the proposition that it is good or prudent to do what you advise. And similarly for acting upon suggestions, recommendations, commands, orders, and requests—each of which *refers*, at least implicitly, to an action. But what of acting upon those propositions—'It is going to rain', 'The moon goes around the earth', 'Hoover was President in 1930'—the statements of which do not refer to any action? Let us put our ques-

¹ John Venn, *The Logic of Chance*, (1866), p. 83.

tion schematically and ask 'What is it for someone *S* to act upon a certain proposition *b*?'

I shall first note some familiar answers which are obviously inadequate; then I shall propose an answer of my own.

2. Some have suggested that '*S* acts on *b*' may be interpreted in the following way:

- (1) *S* acts as if *b* were true.¹

The grammar of 'as if' requires, however, that some clause be understood which can be inserted between the 'as' and the 'if'. Thus Fowler remarks that the full form of 'It is scanned curiously, as if mere scanning would resolve its nature' is 'It is scanned curiously, as it *would be scanned* if mere scanning would resolve its nature'.² Presumably, then, the full form of (1) would be:

- (2) *S* acts as *S* would act if *b* were true.

The use of the subjunctive in 'as if' statements is not generally intended to suggest that the if-clause is false, or that the speaker believes it to be false; it indicates rather that the full statement is non-committal with respect to the truth-value of the if-clause. '*S* acts as *S* would act if *b* were true', similarly, is non-committal with respect to the truth-value of *b* and should not be taken to imply that *b* is false.³ Do we have, then, an adequate paraphrase of '*S* acts on *b*'?

Consider a man who is building a house and who happens to believe that Warsaw is in Poland. The man is acting, Warsaw *is* in Poland, and therefore he is acting as he would act if Warsaw were in Poland; but he need not, at the moment, be acting upon the proposition that Warsaw is in Poland.

A similar objection applies to the following:

- (3) *S* acts as *S* would act if *S* were to believe that *b* is true.

Our carpenter does believe that Warsaw is in Poland and therefore he is acting as he would act if he did believe that Warsaw is in Poland, but he is not acting upon the proposition that it is. Interpretation (3), moreover, is subject to still another difficulty—if it is true, as I have suggested, that

¹ In his *Psychology* (1890), William James spoke of acting 'as if the thing in question were real' (Vol. II, p. 321); in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1911), he said: 'Our only way, for example, of doubting, or refusing to believe that a certain thing *is*, is continuing to act as if it were not' (p. 54; cf. pp. 55, 56).

² H. W. Fowler, *Modern English Usage*, p. 32. Mr. Geach has suggested to me that Fowler is mistaken in his treatment of this example, and that his "full form" should be replaced by: 'It is scanned curiously, as it *would be reasonable to scan it* if mere scanning would resolve its nature'.

³ Hence this is not the 'as if' of Hans Vaihinger, whose *Philosophie des Als Ob* (1911) was a "theory of fictions"—an account of what he took to be the theoretical advantages of treating certain propositions he believed to be false 'as if they were true'.

we sometimes act upon propositions we believe to be false. I insure my house against fire even though I believe there will be no fire. In taking out the insurance, do I act upon a proposition I believe to be false? If I do, then (3) leads to this result: Consider the proposition I believe—namely, the proposition that my house will not burn—and let *it* be *b*; in acting, no matter what I may be doing, I am acting as I would act if I were to believe *b*; and therefore (3) requires us to say that, when I insure my house against fire, I am acting upon the proposition that there will be no fire.

Perhaps we can avoid the latter consequence by saying:

(4) S acts as S would act if S knew for certain that *b* is true.

If I 'knew for certain' that my house would not burn, as distinguished from merely believing that it will not burn, then, presumably, I would not be concerned with fire insurance. But (apart from any other problems that 'know for certain' might introduce in the present context) we still encounter the earlier difficulty. For when we act we do not always act upon those propositions which we 'know for certain' to be true. Our carpenter, for instance, need not now be acting upon the proposition that the earth has existed for hundreds of years past.

The definitions I have criticized are defective in that they do not take account of this fact: to act upon a proposition is to act in a way that is relevant or appropriate to the proposition.¹ It would be easy enough to define 'acting upon' in terms of relevance or appropriateness—'To act upon a proposition is to act in a way that is relevant to the proposition's being true'—but it is just this concept of *relevance* which we originally set out to find.

3. There are, I suggest, four different senses of 'acting upon', closely related to each other. These may be introduced by considering the nature of precautionary activity, which provides us with our first and simplest interpretation.

(i) Whenever we take precautions against some contingency, we act for purposes that are conditional; we act in order that, *if* the contingency should arise, we might then be prepared for it. When an honest man takes out fire insurance, for example, his purpose is not that of subsequently collecting from the insurance company. For a man who acts with the purpose of accomplishing something *E* *fails* in his purpose if he does not accomplish *E*. But the honest policy-holder does not fail in his purpose if there is no fire and hence no insurance to collect.

¹ In the lecture, 'The "Acting As If" Theory of Belief', given at the University of Aberdeen, October 18, 1960, as one of the Second Series of Gifford Lectures on *Belief*, Professor Price points out that to act upon a proposition is to act 'in the light of' that proposition, to 'use it' in some way in 'a practical inference'.

His purpose is a conditional one: he takes out the fire insurance in order that, *if* his house should burn, he might *then* collect.¹

The first of our four senses of 'S acts upon *b*' may thus be put in terms of a conditional purpose:

S acts in order that, if *b* should be true, a certain end would then be realized.

The end that may be realized could, of course, be the avoidance or the prevention of something.) Let us abbreviate our formula this way:

S provides for the possibility of *b* being true.²

The cautious scholar who checks his references before writing 'Megitius was condemned by the provincial Synod of Seville in 782' is providing for the possibility that his statement is incorrect; thus he may be said to act upon the proposition that Megitius was *not* so condemned. Any proposition, therefore, can be 'acted upon', in this first sense of the term.

(ii) If a man goes out into the storm with his umbrella, we would not be likely to say that he is 'providing for the possibility of rain'. But we could say that he is providing for the *fact* that it is raining. And this suggests the second sense of 'S acts upon *b*'; viz.,

S provides for the fact that *b* is true.

An alternative locution would be:

S acts in order that, since *b* is true, a certain end may thus be realized.

This locution, in turn, may be spelled out as follows, in the terms of our original formula:

S acts in order that, if *b* should be true, a certain end would then be realized: and *b* is true.

(iii) We may also act upon a proposition without doing anything to provide for the possibility, or the fact, of the proposition being true. A man who is walking may be said to put his faith in the road in front of him, and thus to be acting on various propositions involving the road—for example, on the proposition that the road will continue to

¹ There are also negative purposes ('He drove slowly in order not to skid'), alternative purposes ('She arranged things so that either Smith would come or Jones would stay away'), and conjunctive purposes ('He made the trip in order to have a rest and to see another part of the country').

² Like other activity words, 'provides' is ambiguous in that it is sometimes used as a task word and sometimes as an achievement word. The distinction may be illustrated by reference to the two sentences, (a) 'S acts with the purpose of providing for E' and (b) 'S successfully provides for E'. When 'provides' is used as a task word, (a) but not (b) is redundant; when it is used as an achievement word, (b) but not (a) is redundant. In the present discussion 'provides' is a task word.

support him. Here he is *relying* upon something instead of providing for something—he does not test the road, or feel his way, or make any preliminary inquiries. Of such a man, we may say three things, I think: first, that he believes the road to be safe (if we ask him, he will say he believes it, though he may not previously have considered the proposition); secondly, that he is not providing for the possibility that his belief is false; and, thirdly, that if he were *not* now to believe that the road is safe, he *would* be doing something to provide for the possibility that it is not—he would take precautions before continuing, or he would not continue at all.

Relying upon, then, gives us our third sense of ‘acting upon’. S may be said to rely upon *b* being true, provided that:

S does not provide for the possibility of not-*b* being true; but if he were not to believe *b*, he would provide for the possibility of not-*b* being true.

‘Providing for the possibility of’ may be spelled out in accordance with our first formula above.

(iv) There is, I believe, one additional use of ‘acting upon’—a use which is of less theoretical importance than are the other three.

A man who plays a role is sometimes said to be acting upon the propositions which the role involves. The candidate who knows that his cause is lost may feel that he owes it to his supporters to go through the motions and continue his campaign; some would say that he is then acting upon the proposition that he is going to win. But in this instance, he is not even providing for the possibility that he will win, much less providing for the fact, or relying upon the fact, that he will win. Here, I think, we have a “degenerate case” of acting-upon, which satisfies the following formula:

S acts in order thereby to act as he believes he would act if he were providing for the possibility that *b* is true.

Those of whom Pascal speaks, when he proposes his wager, seem to have ‘acted upon’ in a similar sense. Pascal wrote: ‘Learn of others who have been bound like you, and . . . follow the way by which they began; by acting as if they believed, taking holy water, having masses said, etc. Naturally that will be the very thing to make you believe and dull your wits.’¹ It would be inaccurate to say, of the people to whom Pascal refers, that they went to mass and took the holy water merely to provide for the possibility that some of the propositions of Christianity

¹ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, No. 233. The French text is: “Apprenez de ceux qui ont été liés comme vous, et . . . suivez la manière par où ils ont commencé: c’est en faisant tout comme s’ils croyaient, en prenant de l’eau bénite, en faisant dire des messes, etc. Naturellement même cela vous fera croire et vous abêtera.”

are true; they were not 'acting upon' them in any of our first three senses of the term. They were acting in order thereby to act as they would act if they were acting upon the propositions, and doing so in order to lead themselves to accept them.^{1 2}

Brown University

¹ I am indebted to philosophers at Brown and at Cornell who pointed out errors in earlier versions of this paper.

² A reply to Professor Chisholm's article, by Mr. Paul Kashap, will appear in the forthcoming issue of ANALYSIS.—Ed.

PAINS, PUNS, PERSONS AND PRONOUNS

By R. B. FREED and J. A. FODOR

IN his recent book *Individuals* Mr. Strawson has made a fresh approach to the tangle of philosophic problems which have to do with minds, bodies, and the relations between them. While announcing himself an opponent both of dualism and of the more obvious forms of reductionism, it is against scepticism that Strawson's most ingenious arguments are brought forth. In the current fashion, Strawson sets out to prove that the sceptic's position on the problem of other minds is logically untenable. Strawson's arguments to this end are two-fold. It is claimed in the first place that the sceptic cannot so much as state his qualms about the existence of other minds without tacitly assuming the very framework of concepts and categories which sceptical arguments are intended to throw into doubt. Secondly, Strawson argues that the temptation to question whether such predicates as 'is in pain', 'is in love', or 'is intoxicated' could ever be known to be true of anyone but oneself stems from a misunderstanding of the function of these and other phrases that we use to talk about persons. The present paper will concern itself with Strawson's second line of argument.¹

Strawson calls predicates which are attributable to persons but not to inanimate material objects *P-predicates*. He claims that:

... it is essential to the character of these predicates that they have both first- and third-person ascriptive uses, that they are both self-ascriptible otherwise than on the basis of observation of the behaviour of the subject of them and other-ascriptible on the basis of behaviour-criteria.

¹ On Strawson's claim that scepticism is self-refuting, cf. M. C. Bradley, 'Mr. Strawson and Scepticism', ANALYSIS, 1959.

To learn their use is to learn both aspects of their use. . . . In order to *understand* this type of concept, one must acknowledge that there is a kind of predicate which is unambiguously and adequately ascribable *both* on the basis of observation of the subject *and* not on this basis, i.e. independently of observation of the subject.¹

Hence it is Strawson's belief that assertions of the form third person + 'is' + P-predicate (henceforth 'T is P.') are associated with a set of logically sufficient behavioural criteria. The satisfaction of these criteria is, however, neither necessary nor sufficient for assertions of the form first person + 'is' + P-predicate ('F is P.').² This duality of their associated criteria is, for Strawson, the fundamental characteristic of predicates ascribable solely to persons.

Our difference with Mr. Strawson centres about his notion of criteria. Strawson is aware of the truism that there are several ways of telling whether a person is in pain. Thus, in particular, if a person other than myself is in pain, then probably I tell that he is by observing his behaviour, by attending to what he says, and so on. On the other hand, if there is any sense in talking about how I tell that *I* am in pain, clearly I do not accomplish this by monitoring my own behaviour. Hence, the statement that first and third person uses of P-predicates are associated with disjoint criteria is obviously true so long as 'criterion' is interpreted in the dictionary sense as 'way of telling', 'sign', or 'test'.

This, however, is *not* the interpretation that Strawson's thesis requires. He says, for example, '... one ascribes P-predicates to others on the strength of observation of their behaviour; and ... the behaviour-criteria one goes on are not just signs of the presence of what is meant by the P-predicate, but are criteria of a logically adequate kind for the ascription of the P-predicate'.³ We cannot seriously suppose that by saying that certain behavioural criteria are logically adequate for third-person P-ascriptions Strawson wishes to contend that these ascriptions are implied by assertions about behaviour. For this would incur the obvious objection that Smith may be in pain under *any* conditions of his overt behaviour, and, contrariwise, that no complaint of Smith's can guarantee his suffering. (There remains, of course, the possibility that Strawson's use of 'behaviour' is a technical one, as was his use of 'criterion'. However, to the extent that the notion of behaviour is broadened, Strawson's position becomes uninteresting.) Clearly, then, for Strawson's anti-sceptical argument to go through, 'criterion' must be taken to mean something very much stronger than 'way of telling'; and for the argument to meet obvious objections, 'criterion' cannot be so interpreted that P-ascriptions are logically implied by sets of statements about behaviour.

¹ P. F. Strawson, *Individuals*, London, 1959, p. 108.

² We use 'is' to represent the appropriate form of the copula in the language considered.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

We must, in any event, read Strawson as making at least the minimal claim that assertions of the form 'T is P.' are in standard cases associated with states of affairs (or, as we shall say, 'conditions') quite other than those associated with 'F is P.' This formulation has the virtue of not forcing Strawson to choose either of the clearly unsatisfactory interpretations of 'criterion' that we have just discussed. It is, in short, the most charitable reading that can be given to Strawson's argument. Unfortunately, however, it leads rather quickly to the intolerable conclusion that P-predicates are systematically ambiguous.

What is it for a sentence to be ambiguous? The answer is revealed by a study of particular cases. The sentence 'The white stuff is the oxidizing chemical.'¹ is ambiguous in the following way: it may be associated either with the state of affairs in which some of the white stuff is oxidizing something, or with the state of affairs in which some of the white stuff is being oxidized. That is, the ambiguity of the sentence lies just in the fact that it is associated with disjoint sets of conditions. Or consider a case where the ambiguity of the sentence can be referred to a single word, as in 'He must have used the wrong key.' which is associated either with the discomfiture of a composer or of a householder. Briefly, sentential ambiguity, whether lexical or syntactical, may invariably be represented in terms of multiplicity of associated conditions. The converse also holds. We may, in fact, take such multiplicity as a suitable working definition of 'ambiguity'. There may admittedly be a temptation to claim that P-predicates have a uniform use but that the criteria for this one use differ. To make this claim stick, some characterization of 'use' must be offered which is independent of 'criteria' and 'conditions'. Such a characterization has not been forthcoming.

If, however, this point about ambiguity is granted, Strawson's position is easily seen to be inconsistent. For Strawson wishes to claim *both* that sentences of the form pronoun + 'is' + P-predicate are unambiguous, *and* that they are associated with different sets of criteria according as the pronoun is in the first or third person.

Strawson might hope to meet this objection with the following argument. The difference between the conditions associated with 'T is P.' and with 'F is P.' arises not from an ambiguity in P-predicates but from a meaning-difference between first and third person pronouns. Against this we can argue that a distinction between pronouns cannot possibly account for the radical distinction between feeling-conditions and behaviour-conditions. Notice that in the general case the distinction

¹ We fully punctuate sentence examples, to indicate that they are well-formed and to specify to which type they belong. Cf. Paul Ziff's *Semantic Analysis* (Cornell U.P., 1960), p. ix; Ziff (who we believe originated the convention) uses punctuation within quotation marks with essentially the same point—to indicate intonation contours. Since this convention reduces ambiguity, we think it a good one to adopt.

in conditions imported by substituting third-person for first-person pronouns is just this: when a first-person pronoun is employed, the associated condition is that what is predicated is predicated of the speaker; when a third-person pronoun is employed, the associated condition is that what is predicated is predicated of some person other than the speaker. If, nevertheless, one wishes to defend Strawson by maintaining that pronouns act in some different way when they occur in the context of P-predicates, this is equivalent to saying that, for example, the 'I' in 'I am in pain.' occurs idiomatically. Such a claim would be nothing short of fantastic.

Further, if the difference between conditions associated with 'T is P.' and 'F is P.' were determined by the pronoun, such sentences as 'Smith is in pain.' or 'The pain was unbearable.' would be ambiguous, in that we would not know whether to associate them with behaviour-conditions or with feeling-conditions. This ambiguity would remain unresolved until the relevant pronoun was supplied. But the univocality of these sentences must be apparent to any speaker of English.

It appears then that only two options are available. If we maintain that the sets of conditions associated with P-predicates are disjoint, we must also maintain that P-predicates are ambiguous. If, on the other hand, we wish to avoid the error of representing P-predicates as ambiguous, we are bound to say that they are associated with a uniform set of conditions. We feel that the latter alternative is obviously correct. 'He is in pain.' like 'I am in pain.' is associated with situations in which someone is having an unpleasant feeling. We suspect that this conclusion will be found unenlightening. This, however, may be due to the influence of a philosophical tradition which liked its explanations to be reductive. Another way of reading the moral is this: analyses that get questions of meaning right are not likely to cut metaphysical ice.

Magdalen College, Oxford

AN EMPIRICAL REFUTATION OF THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

By CLYDE LAURENCE HARDIN

THE ontological argument for the existence of God, which has been variously phrased in the history of philosophy, may be given the following form:

God is the most perfect being, i.e., the being of whom all positive attributes must be predicated;

Existence is a positive attribute;

Therefore, existence must be predicated of God.

Another way of putting it is simply to observe that God's essence includes his existence, or that the proposition 'God exists' is analytic.

The most common reply to this argument is that of Kant, who contends that existence is not a predicate. It is, I think, generally acknowledged that if we can establish this contention, we will have refuted the ontological argument. The trouble with Kant's own argument is that it appears to rely in part upon dubious psychological observations (e.g., that my concept of a hundred thalers in my pocket is not enlarged by thinking of them as existing), and in any case seems at most to show that existence behaves very differently from most predicates. So it is that most philosophers accept Kant's line of attack, but are not quite satisfied that it does all it is intended to do. Modern discussions of the issue commonly restate Gaunilo's objection, and propose a syntactical scheme which will enable us to employ everyday or scientific existential propositions without allowing the formulation of the ontological argument. These always have a faintly question-begging air about them, and are unlikely to convert the unconverted.

Professor Malcolm's view of the matter is typical:

Anselm's ontological proof of *Proslogion* 2 is fallacious because it rests on the false doctrine that existence is a perfection (and therefore that 'existence' is a "real predicate"). It would be desirable to have a rigorous refutation of the doctrine but I have not been able to provide one. I am compelled to leave the matter at the more or less intuitive level of Kant's observation.¹

I propose to supply this more rigorous refutation. This I shall do by showing that he who would maintain that existence is a predicate would be committed to holding that there are analytic statements which are empirically false.

¹ Norman Malcolm, "Anselm's Ontological Arguments", *Philosophical Review*, LXIX (1960), pp. 41-62. The quotation is from p. 44.

We must first remark that anyone who holds that existence is a predicate will oppose alike Russell's, Strawson's and Frege's account of referring expressions; for according to all of these doctrines the ontological argument is rejected as either presupposing or asserting the existence of God by employing the descriptive phrase 'the most perfect being' in the formulation of the definition. We must rather think of the adherent to the view that existence is a predicate as supporting a doctrine which will subdivide Being or Reality, such as Meinong's, with its distinction between existence and subsistence, or perhaps the Scholastic distinction between objective and formal reality. In such a theory, every descriptive expression may be thought of as a name (which following H. W. B. Joseph we might call a 'designation') and is guaranteed a unique reference. This gives him, to be sure, a "bloated" ontology, but a *prima facie* defensible one, since aesthetic considerations ought not to be decisive in metaphysics. With this scheme in mind, let us proceed with the argument:

(1) 'All red balls are red' is analytic. By instantiation, 'The red ball which I am holding in my hand is red' is analytic, since, by the above argument, we are to regard 'the red ball which I am holding in my hand' as a *name*.

(2) 'The existent unicorn which I shall see in the next thirty seconds exists' must be analytic, by parity of reasoning.

(3) The existent unicorn which I shall see in the next thirty seconds is, of course, a unicorn (others would be, for example, those mentioned by various Roman historians), since 'All existent unicorns are unicorns' is analytic. Therefore, 'A unicorn which I shall see in the next thirty seconds exists' is analytic.

(4) We may replace 'exists' at the end of the statement by 'there is' at the beginning. (If this were deemed illegitimate, we would be compelled to say that 'God exists' does not entail 'There is a God', so that the fool who hath said in his heart 'There is no God', might yet be right.) Effecting the suggested replacement, we obtain: 'There is a unicorn which I shall see in the next thirty seconds'. Since this is entailed by an analytic statement, it must be analytic. It should not be difficult for the reader to use this statement and confirm that it is also empirically false.

The courses of action open to the 'existence is a predicate' philosopher are not promising. He may reinterpret some of the words, e.g. 'see'; but surely each objection of this sort may be met *ad hoc* by modifying the example without destroying the character of the inference. He may reject one of the steps of the derivation, perhaps by giving some new account of descriptions according to which definite descriptions

are meaningful but are not proper names, nor do they assert or presuppose existence. It is difficult to imagine what such an account could be. Or, he may insist that no existential proposition can be analytic unless it applies to God. This sort of thing has been attempted in the past; now, as before, it is plainly open to the charge of begging the question. It is conceivable that our philosopher may willingly embrace statements which are analytic and empirically false. If he does this, I can only bow to his superior fortitude.

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PROFESSOR MALCOLM ON "ANSELM'S ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS"

By T. PATTERSON BROWN

IN the January 1960 issue of *The Philosophical Review*, Professor Norman Malcolm has quite intriguingly defended one form of St. Anselm's well-known ontological proof of the existence of God. Nevertheless, it seems clear that his argument contains a subtle error which unfortunately undermines this latest attempt at an *a priori* demonstration of God's existence.

Malcolm argues that, although *existence* is not a logical predicate, *necessary existence* can be a legitimate defining attribute of God. Therefore, he concludes, God actually exists in a necessary manner.¹ This line of reasoning is summarized by Malcolm in the following way:²

(1) If God, a being a greater than which cannot be conceived, does not exist then he cannot *come* into existence. For if He did He would either have been *caused* to come into existence or have *happened* to come into existence, and in either case He would be a limited being, which by our conception of Him He is not. Since He cannot come into existence, if He does not exist His existence is impossible.

(2) If He does exist He cannot have come into existence (for the reasons given), nor can He cease to exist, for nothing could cause Him to cease to exist nor could it just happen that He ceased to exist. So if God exists His existence is necessary.

¹ In this argument Malcolm believes himself to be defending Anselm's statement of the ontological proof in *Proslogion* 3.

² pp. 49-50; the numbering of Malcolm's steps is mine, and for convenience of display the format has been altered.

(3) Thus God's existence is either impossible or necessary.

(4) It can be the former [i.e. God's existence can be impossible] only if the concept of such a being is self-contradictory or in some way logically absurd.

(5) Assuming that this is not so [i.e. assuming that our notion of God is logically sound],

(6) it follows that He necessarily exists.

Now surely step (4) in this argument is untrue, so long as 'impossible' is understood in the same way as Malcolm has used it in (1) and (3). In order to make this criticism obvious, let us review the reasoning behind (1)-(3). Malcolm quite correctly begins by defining God as the greatest conceivable being, and then deduces from this that a God must be eternal, i.e. His existence would have neither beginning nor end. And of course it then follows that God either always exists or never exists at all. If no eternal being presently exists, then it necessarily follows that no such being has ever existed or will ever exist. And, conversely, if an eternal being does presently exist, then that being has always existed and always will exist. These inferences merely explicate the meaning of 'eternal' in English. It is a self-contradiction to say that an eternal being ever begins to exist or ceases existing. But, quite obviously, it is not therefore inconsistent to say that there are no eternal beings.

It is surely undeniable that the following are not compatible:

(a) for God ever to exist is logically impossible because our notion of Him is *inconsistent* or senseless;

(b) for God to exist at any other time than the present is *de facto* precluded, because He is both *consistently* defined as eternal and also doesn't presently exist.

For the latter states that God *is* coherently defined, whereas the former *denies* logical harmony in our notion of God. Unfortunately, Malcolm has confused these two in his argument.

In (1) above Malcolm considers only (b): if there were no God, then God could not *ever* exist because He is by definition eternal. 'If God . . . does not exist then He cannot *come* into existence. . . . [So,] if He does not exist His existence is impossible.' But then in (4) he switches to (a) by arguing: if there were no God, then surely the reason God *could* not ever exist would be that He was *inconsistently* defined. God's existence can be impossible, he says, 'only if the concept of such a being is self-contradictory or in some way logically absurd'. Clearly Malcolm cannot have it both ways; he cannot equate the impossibility that an *eternal* being should exist at any other time *if* He doesn't presently exist, with the quite disparate impossibility *in principle* that an *inconsistently defined* being should ever exist *at all*. But it is just this equation

that Malcolm has to make if his argument is to succeed. Therefore, the argument is fallacious.

As soon as the logical distinction between (a) and (b) is made, it no longer seems sensible to argue: 'God is consistently defined as eternal; so if He didn't presently exist then He would never exist at any other time. But why couldn't He exist at any other time? Surely, because He was inconsistently defined.' Stated thus explicitly, the argument becomes patently invalid. According to Malcolm's own line of reasoning, God could not exist at any other time just because He both was *consistently* defined as eternal and also didn't exist now. If God didn't exist, it would not therefore be self-contradictory to say 'There is an eternal God'—only false. The fact that God would then not exist at any other time (since He cannot in principle *begin* to exist) would certainly not entail that a statement of God's existence was unintelligible.

Malcolm's fatal equivocation between (a) and (b) is clearly brought out in (1): 'if He does not exist His existence is impossible'. What he should have said is that if God does not exist, then His existence is eternally *precluded* (because He is by definition eternal). It is simply not true that if God didn't exist the assertion 'There is a God' would have to be self-contradictory; it might just be (eternally) false.

Unfortunately, therefore, Malcolm's ontological argument will not do. For it is now obvious that merely assuming (5), i.e. assuming our notion of God to be logically sound, cannot entail (6), i.e. that He actually exists. It is perfectly conceivable for God to be consistently defined and yet for Him not to exist (cf. (b)); the fact that God would never exist in that case would not mean that in principle He could not have eternally existed. The logical impossibility of God's *beginning* to exist is a very different matter from a logical impossibility of God's existence. Malcolm's argument neglects that fact. If there were no God, then only one of the following could hold: (a) God's being inconsistently or nonsensically defined, in which case it would be logically impossible for Him to exist at all; or (b) God's being consistently defined as eternal, in which case His existence would be *de facto* precluded forever.

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ON INADEQUATE DEFINITIONS: THEIR INADEQUACY

By JON WHEATLEY

IN 'On "Inadequate" Definitions' (ANALYSIS, 21.5, April 1961), Mr. Loftsgordon attempts to persuade us that when a philosopher says 'X is Y', whereas an analysis of X shows that it is different from Y, he may be neither offering a stipulative definition nor making a mistake; instead, he may be offering a proposal with reformatory intent. Well, of course, he may be doing a number of things other than offering a stipulative definition or making a mistake; for philosophers are a bit like the weather—no one quite knows what they won't do next. More specifically, the philosopher may be citing a mistake made by someone else, or attempting to confuse us, or seeing how the words sound, or trying to reform us, or what not. But to talk of a sentence as being *either* true *or* reformatory is to commit a category mistake. Some sentences are reformatory, some sentences are true; but there is no necessary logical connection between their being either and their being the other. That is, both true and false sentences may be reformatory and may be non-reformatory. So it is unfair to say that the definition 'X is Y' is correct, stipulative or reformatory, as if these were differing alternatives—which is what Loftsgordon seems to be doing. If a definition is reformatory, then it may be correct or incorrect; there is no logical exclusion involved in its being correct (or incorrect) *and* reformatory.

We can imagine two philosophers at it together:

Mr. A: X is Y.

Mr. B: That is incorrect, wrong. An analysis of X shows that it is not Y.

Mr. A: That's true, but it's not the point. My statement was intended to be reformatory, to be a proposal. I wanted to remove some of the connotations which now cluster about such terms as 'good' and 'true'.

And there we appear to have deadlock. What grounds of any nature can Mr. A bring which will convince Mr. B, or *vice versa*? Mr. A wants to say that X is Y, though he agrees that X is not Y; apparently because he claims that X *should be* Y, or something remarkably close to that. Mr. B says that X is not Y, and that therefore to say that X is Y is plainly false. *Prima facie*, B is right; X is not Y, we are agreed, so to say that X is Y must be incorrect. But A appears to have a sound point: we must leave room for reformers and for those philosophers who wish to reject the *Weltanschauung* of the common man.

This is, I think, a real and important philosophical difficulty. The most obvious way to make reformatory plays in philosophy (apart,

of course, from telling the truth, which I grant is fraught with its own great difficulties), the way which Loftsgordon advocates, or at least regards as permissible, and the way most often used by philosophers of the past, is to fly in the face of the facts and say 'X is Y' when plainly (though perhaps not so plainly at the time) it is not so. This is, I think, a legitimate philosophical manoeuvre and a legitimate reformatory manoeuvre; but it is not a legitimate reformatory manoeuvre in the way Loftsgordon thinks it is.

First, the way in which this can be legitimately reformatory: At that time in the history of philosophy when goodness was commonly thought to be some peculiar kind of property pertaining to actions, people, objects, it was, I think, undoubtedly reformatory to say 'A value judgement is simply an expression of emotion'. In so far as those philosophers who supported the Emotive Analysis thought that this was a correct analysis of value judgements, it was (or at least is now) clear that they were wrong. If on the other hand they thought that this was how we *should* use value judgements (as, of course, they did not) they were (or rather would have been) (a) unable to defend themselves against the attacks of people who said the position itself was immoral (an objection which had no bearing on whether a value judgement *is* an expression of emotion) and (b) unable to substantiate their position in any way, for under their own doctrine of evaluation there was no possible ground for reaching the evaluative conclusion that a value judgement *should* be an expression of emotion. But to say 'A value judgement is simply an expression of emotion' was certainly reformatory, in that it reminded the philosophical community of what it had clearly forgotten: that there is a large emotional content in evaluation, and that when someone gives utterance to a value judgement an expression of emotion can often be substituted for it; not necessarily without changing the sense of the original remark, but without making nonsense of the remark in its context. Thus 'Stealing!!' and 'It is wrong to steal' are often alternative expressions; not in the sense that they mean the same, but in the sense that when one is logically appropriate the other probably is as well.

I am thus saying that there is a real and important way in which saying 'X is Y' can be both incorrect and reformatory; but this is not the sort of reformatory move which Loftsgordon had in mind. For saying 'X is Y' in this sort of context is not a *proposal*, which is suggested for our adoption on grounds other than its correctness, but is either an attempt to say what is correct, or a deliberate exaggeration to help (or force) philosophers to see what they had been neglecting.¹

If a philosopher puts forward an incorrect definition 'X is Y' when

¹ I have discussed this point with greater thoroughness in 'The Logical Status of Metaphysical Theories', *Theoria*, 1, §1961, especially p. 79 *et seq.*

it is not reformatory in the way I have outlined (or when its reformatory work has been done) then he seems to be laying himself open to the following two similar objections:

(a) Most 'X is Y' definitions are uninteresting if incorrect, except in the reformatory way I have outlined, and then only interesting until their reformatory work is done. Take the example of the verifiability criterion. Some philosophers wanted to call unverifiable statements meaningless. But once we notice that unverifiable statements are not all necessarily meaningless, then the only point in calling such statements meaningless is the emotional flavour of 'meaningless', an emotional flavour that these philosophers have no right to trade on. After all, we already have a perfectly good word by which to refer to unverifiable statements, namely 'unverifiable'. Why impoverish the language by bringing in a synonym by (I insist) inadequate definition? The same considerations apply to 'producing the greatest pleasure for the greatest number'—if shorthand for this is required, a new word can be introduced.

(b) Loftsgordon suggests that incorrect 'X is Y' definition is needed by those who do not wish to work within the *Weltanschauung* of the common man. But no inadequate 'X is Y' definition, so long as it is a genuine definition and not something else, can help in that endeavour. All that is achieved by making two words of ordinary language mean what one of them previously meant is the impoverishment of the language without enriching the philosophers' language one whit. Of course, 'Good is just the production of the greatest pleasure (etc.)' is peculiar in that two meanings appear to *amalgamate* (the commendatory portion of 'good' with the desirable portion of 'pleasure', or something like that). But this amalgamation is not definition at all, if it does take place, but is the genuine invention of a new if inexplicit concept. There, surely, we badly need a new word; at least, we do if the concept is to be made at all explicit.

To summarise: Loftsgordon defends incorrect 'X is Y' definition by saying it has a use. What I have tried to show is the following: in so far as 'X is Y' definition is definition, and not some odd and inexplicit form of amalgamation of concepts, it is muddling; this would not matter if such definition were useful, but it is also useless to do what he wants it to do. The amalgamation of concepts is not something Loftsgordon defends, so I leave it alone—I have no objections to it if it is done carefully and explicitly and not covertly and inexplicitly.

I suspect that Loftsgordon is trying to reintroduce into philosophy the unoriginal and, as far as I am concerned, unlovely idea that the truth of a statement can be defended on *value* grounds; that is, he is suggesting that when X is not Y we can legitimately say 'X is Y' on

the grounds that X *should be* Y. He is doing this, I suspect, in the interests of metaphysics, one entirely legitimate form of which is, presenting a different *Weltanschauung* from that of the common man. I am entirely happy with the latter project and wholly against the former. If we are to dabble in metaphysics again (a project I feel to be eminently worthwhile) let us not forget what we learned in our linguistic days.

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'HETEROLOGICAL' AND NAMELY-RIDERS

By P. J. FITZPATRICK

IN his article 'Ryle on Namely-Riders',¹ Mr. Geach has some interesting things to say about uses of 'it'. I do not think, however, that he has substantiated his claim to show the fallaciousness of Professor Ryle's proof that we cannot ask whether 'heterological' is heterological. He considers Ryle's unpacking of the assertion that this is so into: "'heterological' lacks the property for which it stands, namely that of lacking the property for which it stands, namely . . .". Ryle claims that this succession of namely-riders is spurious, for no property is ever mentioned; Geach contends that the demand for namely-riders in this unpacking is unwarranted.

He begins by showing that the initial clause of the unpacking may be taken in two ways. The first is:

(1) 'Heterological' lacks the property for which it stands,

in which the predicate is:

(2) — lacks the property for which it stands

with the argument "'heterological'". The second is:

(3) 'Heterological' lacks the property for which 'heterological' stands,

in which the predicate is:

(4) — lacks the property for which 'heterological' stands

¹ ANALYSIS 21.3, 1961.

with the same argument. Geach rightly points out that even if (1) and (3) be taken as identical, it does not follow that the predicates (2) and (4) are the same. But he then goes on to consider the suggestion that (2) is ambiguous, with an import varying according to the logical subject we supply as antecedent to 'it': so that the last six words of the predicate would be an expression referring now to this, now to that property. That this is not the case, he claims to show by rewriting (2) in a form lacking the 'it':

(5) — (is an epithet that) at once (unambiguously) stands for and lacks some property or other.

So the last six words of (2) have no shifting reference; nor, clearly enough, have they a constant reference, since different heterological epithets stand for different properties. So they do not stand for any specifiable property at all.

I cannot see the force of this argument. Both (5) and (2) can be written in quantificational terms as:

(6) $(\exists x)(x \text{ is a property} \cdot \& \cdot \text{ — is an epithet} \cdot \& \cdot \text{ — stands for } x \cdot \& \cdot \text{ — lacks } x)$.

This may be called ambiguous, in the sense that any predicate with an existential quantifier is ambiguous. If, for a given epithet 'E', (6) turns into a true statement when the mention of 'E', i.e. "'E'", is made the argument of (6), there will have to be some property P which 'E' stands for and which 'E' lacks. Of course, P is unspecifiable before such an argument is chosen: but it has to be specifiable once the choice is made, or the statement is false.¹ Existential quantification is of its nature indeterminate: its instantiations are determinate just as essentially. Reverting to Ryle's terminology, we are entitled to demand a rider of the form 'namely the property such-and-such' not until, but as soon as, the argument-place in (6) has been filled. Again Ryle denies that there is a test as such for telling whether or not a word is a 'non-self-epithet', in the sense that there is a test for telling whether or not a word is obscene or polysyllabic. We have made the same point by showing that the expansion (6) of ' — is heterological' contains an existentially quantified variable whose instantiations vary with the fillings chosen for the argument-place.

And, surely, our demand for a namely-rider is just what is successful with 'German', 'polysyllabic', and 'obscene', but not with 'heterological'. For consider the epithet 'hendecasyllabic' and the property of hendecasyllabicity; abbreviate the epithet to 'H', the abstract noun to 'Hy', and put "'H'" as argument to (6). This yields:

¹ That an argument "'A'" turns (6) into a false statement does not, of course, mean that 'A' is homological. 'A' might be a word like 'to' which does not stand for any property at all.

- (7) $(\exists x) (x \text{ is a property. \& . 'H' is an epithet. \& . 'H' stands for } x. \& . \text{'H' lacks } x).$

For (7) to be true, it is a necessary condition that the property for which 'H' stands be specifiable: the namely-rider, in other words, must be informative. The property in question is Hy, and we can put:

- (8) Hy is a property. \& . 'H' is an epithet. \& . 'H' stands for H. \& . 'H' lacks Hy.

Is (8) true? Passing for our purposes the first three conjuncts in it, we have to decide the truth-value of the fourth. This is a matter of prosody: the conjunct is true, in other words, because 'hendecasyllabic' has six syllables, not eleven. So (8) is true. And, since there is no property other than Hy for which 'H' stands, the truth of (8) is equivalent to the truth of (7).

Is (8) still true if we interpret 'H' as 'heterological', and 'Hy' as 'heterologicality'? Putting it another way, is "'H'" under this interpretation an argument for (6) which makes a true statement of it? Once more, let us pass the first three conjuncts and examine the fourth. In the preceding interpretation, this fourth conjunct (" 'H' lacks Hy ") set us counting the syllables in the word abbreviated to 'H'. This time, it sets us testing for the heterologicality of the word. We know that the predicate '— is heterological' has been expressed as (6). In other words, we have to see whether "'H'", i.e. mention of the epithet 'H', is an argument for (6) which turns it into a true statement of the form (7), with a statement of the form (8) for its instantiation.¹ In this new interpretation of (8), let us pass the first three conjuncts: we now find ourselves asked to decide the truth-value of the fourth—to decide whether or not "'H' lacks Hy" is true. But this brings us back to where we started earlier in the paragraph, and the vicious circle has begun. Whereas the criterion for the heterologicality of 'hendecasyllabic' meant applying a prosodic test, the criterion for the heterologicality of 'heterological' simply sends us back from (8) to (6), to (7), to (8), *et sic deinceps*. It is not a criterion at all.

Up to now I have followed Geach in taking the statement "'heterological' is heterological" in the sense of (1), that is, as the predicate (2) with the argument "'heterological' ". I now follow him in taking it in the sense of (3), that is, as the predicate (4) with the same argument. Geach says that the namely-rider called for by the last six words of (3) would be:

- (9) Namely, the property of lacking the property for which it stands.

¹ There is, as in the previous interpretation, no property other than Hy for which 'H' stands.

The 'it' in (9), he says, cannot be replaced by "'heterological'", for (9) is tantamount to:

(10) Namely, the property of being an epithet lacking the property for which it stands,

and to ask concerning the last six words in (10) 'namely, which property?' is to suppose that there is one property for which all heterological epithets stand. This is, of course, not the case; so the request for a namely-rider is illegitimate, and the infinite regress never gets started.

But I do not see how it can avoid getting started. To treat the last six words of (10) as a referring expression that calls for a namely-rider is not at all the same thing as to postulate a mysterious property which all heterological epithets stand for. Once more, the namely-riders will be demanded only when it has been decided what epithet is under consideration: but when that determination has been made, the demand is perfectly legitimate. The property mentioned by (10) is possessed by whatever epithet makes (6) into a true statement when mention of it is made into the argument of (6). In other words, deciding the truth-value of (3) means deciding whether or not mention of the word 'heterological' supplies us with an argument which makes (6) into a false statement. This is exactly what we had to decide on the second interpretation of (8), and we saw there that the quest was futile. An instantiation is of necessity something definite; the existential quantifier is idly used if no instantiation is in principle specifiable.

That is just where 'hendecasyllabic' and the rest differ from 'heterological'. The former are homological or heterological according to their measuring up or failure to measure up to certain prosodic, etymological, or moral criteria mentioned in the riders 'namely hendecasyllabicity', 'namely obscenity', and the like. But the namely-riders we get when we try to decide the heterologicality of 'heterological' are empty, are introductions without anything to introduce, are perpetually prefatory. Nor is this due to the unreasonableness of looking for such riders here: rather, as Ryle argues, the trouble comes from thinking that words could just be heterological without more ado, without any assignable and significant namely-riders.

A last point. Geach alleges a breakdown in the Rylean doctrine of referring expressions calling for namely-riders in the statement:

(11) The only man who ever stole a book from Snead made a lot of money by selling it.

The first ten words in (11) would seem to call for a namely-rider like 'namely Robinson'. Yet they cannot be a referring expression, since 'Robinson' cannot be put in their place *salva veritate*. The expression:

(12) Robinson made a lot of money by selling it

is not as it stands an intelligible proposition at all, and so cannot be inferred from (11) and

(13) Robinson is the only man who ever stole a book from Snead.

I think this argument confuses a stronger thesis about namely-riders with a weaker. The weaker one asserts that referring expressions call for namely-riders; the stronger, that other names of what is mentioned in the namely-rider can *always* take the place of the referring expression *salva veritate*. The whole question of substitution for referring expressions is notoriously obscure; but surely Ryle is committed only to the weaker thesis, which does not seem obscure at all. To call for a namely-rider amounts to asking 'which X?', to demanding an instantiation. Whatever one thinks of (12), the question 'which man?' is not irrelevant to (11) as it would be to

(14) The man who steals a book from Snead can make a lot of money by selling it.

Unlike (14), (11) is about a particular man: so we can ask the question 'which man?', and add the rider 'namely Robinson' to the first ten words of it. It is also about a particular book: so we can at least ask 'which book?', as we cannot with (14). For (11), unlike (14), concerns an actual theft; and it would be an odd theft about which such questions could not be asked.

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CANS AND CONDITIONALS: A REJOINDER

By KEITH LEHRER

IN a recent issue of *ANALYSIS*,¹ Bruce Goldberg and Herbert Heidelberger have taken issue with an article of mine that also appeared in *ANALYSIS*.² In that article I had assumed that Austin's argument,³ to the effect that 'I can if I choose' is not a causal conditional, was conclusive. I then attempted to show that the view, attributed by Austin to Moore, that 'I can' is analyzable as 'I shall if I choose', where the latter is a causal conditional, is mistaken. The following quotation from my article expresses quite clearly, I believe, what I set out to do:

I shall first show, using Austin's argument as a premise, that if 'I can' is analyzed as 'I shall, if I choose', then the latter does *not* express a causal connection, and secondly, I shall show, independently of Austin's argument, that 'I can' must not be analyzed as 'I shall, if I choose'.⁴

In the first paragraph of their article, Messrs. Goldberg and Heidelberger say,

We shall not, in this paper, take issue with Lehrer's conclusion, viz., that 'I shall, if I choose' is not causal: what we shall try to show is that his argument does not establish that conclusion.⁵

Now this is a very puzzling thing to say; for I did not present any argument to establish that conclusion. Nowhere in my article did I argue that 'I shall, if I choose' is not causal, though I am convinced that it is not. I argued that *if* 'I can' is analyzed as 'I shall, if I choose', *then* 'I shall if I choose' is not causal: which is quite different. Furthermore, as is clear from the quotation above, I went on to deny that 'I can' *is* to be analyzed as 'I shall, if I choose'. So I do not see how they could have thought that I had presented an argument to show that 'I shall, if I choose' is not causal.

However, their remarks are relevant to my argument to establish the conclusion that *if* 'I can' is analyzed as 'I shall, if I choose', *then* the latter is not a causal conditional, and I want to consider them in detail. Having summarized my argument, they correctly point out,

Austin shows that 'I can, if I choose' is not a causal conditional, since it is not a conditional at all. . . .

and conclude,

But if 'I can, if I choose' is not a conditional, then none of the steps in Mr. Lehrer's argument can be taken, since they are founded upon the rules of inference sanctioned by the treatment of 'I can, if I choose' as a conditional.⁶

¹ 'Mr. Lehrer on the Constitution of Cans', *ANALYSIS*, 21.4 (March, 1961), p. 96.

² 'Ifs, Cans, and Causes', *ANALYSIS*, 20.6 (June, 1960), pp. 122-124.

³ 'Ifs and Cans', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. XLII, 1956. pp. 107-32

⁴ Lehrer, p. 123.

⁵ Goldberg and Heidelberger, p. 96.

⁶ *Ibid.*

The conclusion of their argument seems to me to be plainly false. The first step in my argument simply consists in substituting 'I shall, if I choose' for 'I can' in 'I can, if I choose', supposing that 'I can' is analyzed as 'I shall, if I choose', that is supposing that 'I can' and 'I shall, if I choose' are synonymous,¹ and surely this step can validly be taken whether 'I can, if I choose' is a conditional or not. The valid substitution of synonyms is not subject to a restriction that such substitutions can only occur in conditional sentences!

My critics are thus mistaken in saying that none of the steps in my argument can validly be taken if 'I can, if I choose' is not a conditional; but it is still possible that *some* of the steps in my argument cannot validly be taken if 'I can, if I choose' is not a conditional. Let us consider this possibility. By substituting 'I shall, if I choose' for 'I can' in 'I can, if I choose', we get 'I shall, if I choose, if I choose'. I then concluded that 'I shall, if I choose, if I choose' is equivalent to simply 'I shall, if I choose'. Now this step from 'I shall, if I choose, if I choose' to 'I shall, if I choose' is clearly valid if we assume that 'I shall, if I choose, if I choose' is a conditional; but, as Goldberg and Heidelberger point out, I am not entitled to that assumption, since I have assumed that 'I can, if I choose' is not a conditional.

However, I still do think that the step is valid, though on rather informal grounds, because I do not see what 'I shall, if I choose, if I choose' could mean unless it is just a redundant way of saying 'I shall, if I choose'. Thus, if 'I shall, if I choose, if I choose' is meaningful, it must, I think, be equivalent to the simple 'I shall, if I choose'.

If it is objected that 'I shall, if I choose, if I choose' is meaningless, that is not at all damaging to my argument. In fact, it would establish the conclusion. For we arrived at 'I shall, if I choose, if I choose' by substituting 'I shall, if I choose' for 'I can' in the meaningful sentence 'I can, if I choose'; this step is valid on the supposition that 'I can' is analyzed as 'I shall, if I choose'; and if we have arrived at a meaningless sentence, then that is a *reductio* of the supposition, that is, of the supposition that 'I can' is analyzed as 'I shall, if I choose'. But if it is false that 'I can' is analyzed as 'I shall, if I choose', then the view mentioned above, which Austin attributes to Moore, is mistaken.

Though the principal contentions of Goldberg and Heidelberger are, I believe, mistaken, I am grateful to them for raising the question whether the validity of my argument depends on treating 'I can, if I choose' as a conditional. For that is an important question, and I am glad to have had the opportunity to explain why I think the answer is negative.

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¹ I did not say in my article that if 'I can' is analyzed as 'I shall, if I choose', then they are synonymous; but, since it was an analysis in Moore's sense that was being discussed, this should have been obvious. See, G. E. Moore, 'A Reply to My Critics' in *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, edited by P. A. Schilpp (Tudor Publishing Company, New York), p. 663.

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